(c) what are the reasons for delay in giving environmental clearances to these proposed units?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) Three industrial projects were referred to this Ministry during the last 6 months. These proposals were from M|s Plama Laboratories Ltd., M|s BASF India Ltd., and M|s Kirloskar Ferrous Industries Ltd. These industrial proposals pertain to bulk drugs, dyes and intermediates, and iron & steel manufacturing respectively.

(c) These projects could not be finally appraised for want of requisite information and clarifications from the project prosponent and relevant expert agencies including National Chemical Laboratories, Pune and Industrial Toxicological Research Centre, Lucknow.

Environmental Clearance for Prawn Farming in Orissa

7941. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of individuals and public sector companies doing prawn farming in Orissa;

(b) whether they have obtained permission from his Ministry.

(c) if so, the dates when they had submitted applications and the date when their applications were sanctioned;

(d) whether all of them have got clearance from his Ministry; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (e) As per available information, 11,495 hectares of water area is under brackish water fish farms in Orisa. The farms are mainly in the unorganised sector. Two applications from private sector operators have been received for clearance of prawn culture projects from the environmental angle. Clearances for these projects have not been given. The application of M|s Aqua Teak Estates Ltd., was received on 17-8-94. With respect to the proposal of M|s Chilka Aquatic Farms Ltd., the State Government of Orissa had given them, in 1992, an advance possession of 400 ha. of land. Consequent to a large number of representations, the State Government was advised to carry out a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Study of the prawn culture project in Chilka Lake by a multidisciplinary group. The EIA report from the State Government is awaited. However, the work on the project has been stopped.

Plantation of rare timbers

7942. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would encourage the plantation of rare timbers like Sandalwood and Rosewood by various State Governments;

(b) whether it is a fact that Rosewood and Sandalwood are not being replanted at a favourable rate by the State Governments;

(c) whether some financial assistance would be extended by Government to the Andhra Pradesh Government to undertake plantation of Rosewood and Sandalwood in appropriate areas, and;

(d) if so, the details of financial aid for rare and valuable timber plantations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (d) Afforestation and tree planting programmes are undertaken by the implementing agencies in the States including the State of Andhra Pradesh,

subject to availability of funds under State Plans, Centrally Sponsored Scheme and externally aided projects. Plantation of species of local importance is encouraged under these programmes. Rosewood and Sandalwood trees are planted in accordance with the local conditions in suitable areas.

Pollution by Mathura Refinery

7943. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the oil refinery at Mathura thirty miles away from the Taj Mahal, now sends 1000 kilos of sulphur dioxide into the air every hour;

(b) whether this level of pollution is in breach of India's own environmental safety laws;

(c) whether pollution from the refinery is affecting adversely, not only the Taj Mahal but also the Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary and the ancient temples of Vrindaban and Mathura; and

(d) if so,, what steps, if any Government intend to take to protect the country's heritage from such pollution?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) The Mathura Refinery emits about 650 kg per hour of sulphur dioxide against the prescribed limit of 1000.

(c) The expert opinion in this regard suggests that there is only a marginal effect of the emissions from the Mathura Refinery on the Taj Mahal and other sensitive spots in the Agra-Mathura region.

(d) Steps taken by the Government to save the country's heritage from pollution include;

(i) A trapezium surrounding the Taj Mahal has been down marcated. No new pollution industry is allowed to be set up in this area.

(ii) There is a ban on the use of furnace oil and diesel generators by the industries in Agra. The foundries are not permitted to operate during winter nights.

(iii) A continuous sulphur dioxide monitoring station has been maintained at the Taj Mahal from January, 1991 to monitor the levels of sulphur dioxide and oxides of nitrogen in the ambient air.

(iv) The Mathura Refinery authorities are continuously monitoring the ambient air quality at Mathura and adjacent areas since the inception of the refinery.

(v) A network of ambient air quality monitoring stations has been set up and operated in Agra by the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board.

(vi) The Forests Department of Government of Uttar Pradesh has created a green belt around the Taj Mahal by planting trees on available government land. The Ministry of Environment and Forests has also initiated a green belt development plan in Agra with the help of the Uttar Pradesh Government. It has been reported that 150000 saplings were planted in 1994 in fallow lands available in the vicinity of Taj Mahal.

(vii) The Archaeological Survey of India is constantly monitoring the ambient air quality including sulphur dioxide, suspended particulate matter and other pollutants as well as meteorological data around Taj Mahal. Besides this maintenance work of Taj Mahal is carried out regularly.

(viii) The Government of India has initiated a ten point package programme in the Agra-Mathura Trapezium to save Taj Mahal from the effects of air pollution. The components of the package programme include the following: